



United States  
Department of  
Agriculture

Forest  
Service

Medicine Bow-Routt National  
Forests and Thunder Basin  
National Grassland

2468 Jackson Street  
Laramie, WY 82070  
307-745-2300  
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**File Code:** 2720; 1950

**Date:** August 11, 2016

Dear Interested Party:

The United States Forest Service (Forest Service), Medicine Bow – Routt National Forests and Thunder Basin National Grassland (MBRTB), is preparing an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) to consider and disclose the anticipated environmental effects of implementing projects proposed by Steamboat Ski and Resort Corporation (SSRC) at Steamboat Ski Resort (Steamboat). The proposal would occur within the resort's existing Special Use Permit area (Permit Boundary) that is located on National Forest System (NFS) lands, and would be consistent with the 2011 Steamboat Master Development Plan Amendment (MDPA). These projects are proposed to improve the quality of guest services, increase operational efficiencies, and enhance the recreation experience for all skier ability levels. Details on how to comment are found at the conclusion of this scoping notice.

### **Purpose and Need**

The MBRTB, through acceptance of SSRC's 2011 MDP and Steamboat's site-specific project proposal, has identified a need to: improve the teaching terrain for beginner ability level guests to provide for an effective and comfortable learning progression; address operational inefficiencies and circulation of existing terrain; and provide additional lift-served terrain to meet guest expectations for diverse terrain offerings. The purpose of the following proposed projects is to address and resolve the aforementioned deficits.

### **Proposed Project Descriptions**

This proposal comprises individual projects located in the Rough Rider, Bashor Bowl, Pony Express, and Pioneer Ridge areas of Steamboat (reference the attached Scoping Map).

#### *Rough Rider and Bashor Bowl*

To better serve youth and family skiers, allow for more effective utilization of the base area, and relieve congestion in the base area during peak periods, SSRC is proposing to construct the Rough Rider Learning Center and make improvements to adjacent Bashor Bowl. Creation of the Rough Rider Learning Center would include installation of a gondola (Bashor Gondola, located on private lands), construction of the Bashor Children's Facility and Restaurant (located on private lands), removal of the existing Bashor Pavilion and bathroom facilities, installation of multiple moving carpet lifts, installation of a fixed grip chairlift (Rough Rider lift), removal of the existing Rough Rider platter lift, construction of a new skier bypass from *Boulevard* to the Rough Rider Learning Center, grading of associated novice and beginner terrain, and installation of snowmaking infrastructure.

Proposed improvements within Bashor Bowl include replacement and realignment of the outdated Bashor lift (located on both private and NFS lands), construction of two new skiways from the realigned Bashor lift top terminal, re-grading at the base of Bashor Bowl, expansion of the Rabbit





Ears Terrain Park, removal of the Mavericks Superpipe, construction of a new novice trail connecting *Yoo Hoo* to *Big Foot*, and reconfiguration of existing snowmaking infrastructure.

#### *Pony Express*

The Pony Express area offers challenging terrain, but is often underutilized due to marginal snow conditions and the need for trail improvements and increased lift capacity. Proposed improvements within the Pony Express area include: enhancements to trail corridors through vegetation removal, grading, and rock blasting; increased capacity of the Pony Express lift by adding carriers to the existing lift; construction of a ski patrol and restroom facility near the top terminal of the Pony Express lift; installation of winch cat anchors; construction of a ski-way from the junction of *Lower Middle Rib* and *Chaps* ski trails to the Storm Peak Express chairlift; and installation of snowmaking infrastructure and coverage to *Upper* and *Lower Middle Rib*, *the Crux*, *Upper* and *Lower Longhorn*, *Lower Pony Express* lift line, *Upper* and *Lower Storm Peak Express Connectors*, *BC Ski Way*, and *Chaps*. The proposed trail enhancements and the addition of snowmaking would allow for safe and reliable trail conditions, improved operational efficiency, increase skier utilization, and improved skier experience.

#### *Pioneer Ridge*

The Pioneer Ridge area is currently inside Steamboat's Permit Boundary but outside the operational boundary, and is used by a very limited number of expert skiers who choose to leave the current operational boundary through established access points. Existing skier challenges include insufficient safe egress routes as well as inadequate return routes to established trails and lifts. To meet the needs and expectations of Steamboat's guests and provide a safe skiing experience in Pioneer Ridge, Steamboat proposes to expand the operational boundary by approximately 355 acres to encompass Pioneer Ridge, construct a new detachable quad chair lift (Pioneer 2 lift), create 95 acres of gladed skiing, conduct 40 acres of hazard tree removal and vegetation management, install a bridge over Burgess Creek and construct an associated collector skiway, and define multiple gladed trails and egress routes to connect with existing and proposed terrain and facilities.

#### **Request for Comments**

The MBRTB is requesting your comments on any component of this proposal. The purpose of this scoping period is to provide an opportunity for interested parties to provide early and meaningful participation on this project and to learn more about the project. Your questions and comments regarding this proposal are an integral part of the environmental analysis process. Respondents should include: (1) name, address, telephone number, and organization represented, if any; (2) reference the "Steamboat EIS" and (3) specific facts, concerns or issues, and supporting reasons why they should be considered.

Written comments must be submitted via mail, fax, electronically, or in person (Monday through Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., excluding holidays) to: Dennis Jaeger, c/o Erica Dickerman, Project Leader, 2468 Jackson Street, Laramie, WY, FAX: (307) 745-2398. Electronic comments including attachments can be submitted to on the project website at: <https://cara.ecosystem-management.org/Public/CommentInput?Project=48246> or via email to [comments-rocky-mountain-medicine-bow-routt@fs.fed.us](mailto:comments-rocky-mountain-medicine-bow-routt@fs.fed.us).

Your comments will be most helpful if received by September 19, 2016. Only those persons who submit comments during this comment period will be placed on the mailing list for future information regarding these projects. Names and contact information submitted with comments will become part of the public record and may be released under the Freedom of Information Act. Individuals who do not submit comments but wish to remain on this mailing list should contact Erica Dickerman by phone at (970) 870-2185 or by email to [edickerman@fs.fed.us](mailto:edickerman@fs.fed.us).

One public open house will be held on August 25th, 2016 from 5:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. at the Steamboat Springs Community Center located at 1605 Lincoln Avenue, Steamboat Springs, CO 80427. At the beginning of the public open house, a brief introduction to the process and project will be provided. Representatives from the MBRTB, Hahns Peak Bears Ears Ranger District, and SSRC will be present to answer questions and provide additional information on this project.

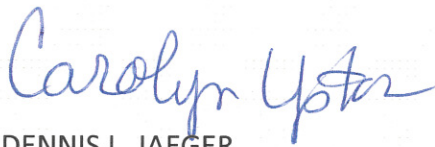
It is important to note that the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) review of this project is governed by the Pre-Decisional Objection Process, which has replaced the Forest Service's previous Administrative Appeal Process (36 CFR 215). The Pre-Decisional Objection Process for this project involves the following steps:

- Publication of a Notice of Intent in the Federal Register to formally initiate the NEPA analysis and scoping;
- Gather and analyze comments to determine issues/alternatives;
- Preparation of a Draft Environmental Impact Statement;
- Publication of a Notice of Availability in the Federal Register for the Draft EIS to start a 45-day Comment Period;
- Preparation of a Final EIS and draft Record of Decision; and
- Initiation of a 45-day Objection Period for individuals and organizations who provide comments during this scoping effort and/or the 45-day comment period on the Draft EIS. Objections will be reviewed and resolved prior to issuance of a final Record of Decision.

### Closing

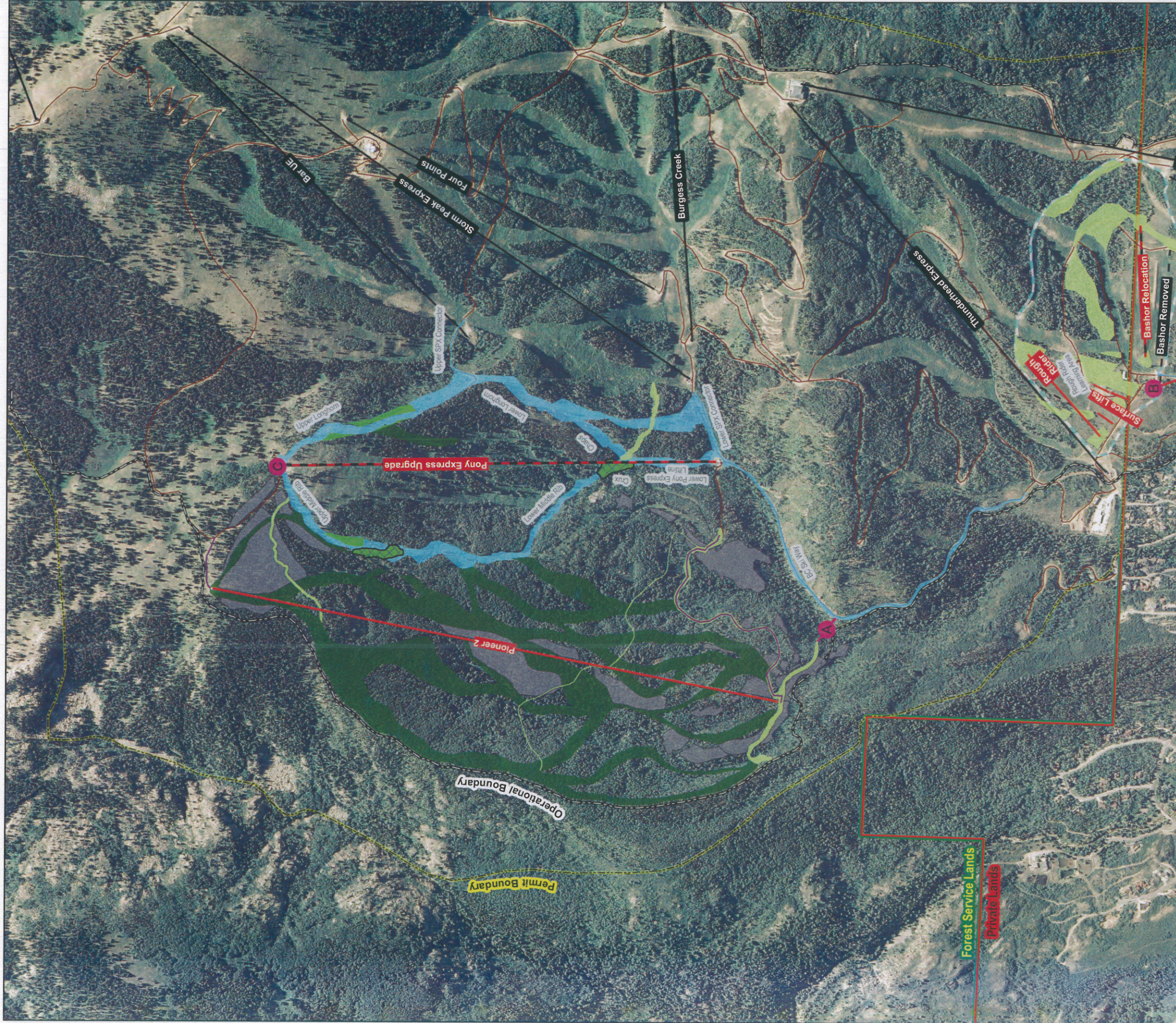
To obtain additional information about the Steamboat EIS, please contact Erica Dickerman by phone at (970) 870-2185 or by email to [edickerman@fs.fed.us](mailto:edickerman@fs.fed.us). Thank you for your participation. I look forward to your comments.

Sincerely,

  
DENNIS L. JAEGER  
Forest Supervisor

cc: Erica Dickerman, Rita Bennett





# Steamboat Ski Resort Improvements EIS Scoping Map

## Legend

Existing:	Proposed:	
Lifts	Lifts	Rock Blasting
Roads	Lift Upgrades	Snowmaking Coverage
Permit Boundary	Roads	Rough Rider & Bashor Bowl Snowmaking Coverage
	Ski Trails	Operational Boundary
	Ski Trail Enhancements	Burgess Creek Bridge
	Glading	Bashor Children's Facility & Restaurant
	Hazard Tree Removal	Patrol Hut and Restroom



Date: August 2016

Prepared By:

